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E

PALESTINE

E 9207

9 JUL 1948

120

Registry Number: E9207/1260/31

TELEGRAM FROM
Acting Consul-General
JERUSALEM.
No. 242.
Secret
Dated 8.7.48
Received in Registry 9.7.48

Charges against British subjects abducted by Irgun Zvai Leumi in Jerusalem.

Refers Jerusalem telegram No. 241 of 8th. July. (E9165/1260/31).
Mr. Sheringham has seen Dr. Joseph and the Haganah Military Commander of Southern Jerusalem, and was told that the Irgun had 'serious charges of espionage' against the arrested men. Jewish authorities were negotiating for the men to be handed over to them, and had received assurances that the prisoners would not be maltreated. If they were handed over to Haganah, Consulate would be informed and would be given facilities to safeguard their interests. Repeated to UK Del. New York, Cairo, Rhodes, Haifa, and Washington.

Last Paper.
E 9165.

(Minutes.)
It may be possible to give Mr BRYANT's brother some slight encouragement.
Lance Pedder 11. 9:vii

References.
Mr Bryant's brother, & the London Office of the Congrat., informed by 'phone
No. 9/7

See within. Amn bmt of Jerusalem tel 242 of 8/7
2) — .. — 242. 9.19:vii
14/7
F. 22:vii

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)
1) Palestine Dispatch (n/c = 8880 of July)
Copies to)
Mr Nibbert (N. Dept)
Mr Cox (T. Dept)
14 July.

(Action completed.)
(Ind...)
16/7/48

Next Paper.

E. 9207/1260/31.

AMENDED COPY

13th July, 1948

PW

POLITICAL DISTRIBUTION

Jerusalem telegram No.242 to Foreign Office 8th July.

Paragraph 3 line 14 for [grps undec] read:-

"Such an approach, which would have no political motive and would indeed be distasteful, would hardly be likely to enhance the prestige of more regular Jewish authorities. Doctor Joseph professed to be unmoved by this and said Consulate would doubtless do whatever it thought most useful in the circumstances. The Haganah Officer however told Sheringham that he nearly fell off his chair when he heard it suggested that British might approach IZL.

4. Belgian Consul General was in Tel aviv [grps omitted]"

[Note by Communications Department: A further repetition of omitted groups is being obtained].

B B B

a large and important omission.

J. Belfour (4)

E 9167

9 JUL 1948

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[This telegram is of particular secrecy and should be retained by the authorised recipient and not passed on].

Cypher/OTP

POLITICAL DISTRIBUTION

FROM JERUSALEM TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Acting British Consul General.

No.242 D. 6.49 p.m. 8th July, 1948
8th July, 1948 R. 8.50 p.m. 8th July, 1948

Repeated to United Kingdom Delegation New York, Cairo, Rhodes, Haifa and Washington.

IMMEDIATE
SECRET

E 9165

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No.242 of July 8th, repeated for information to United Kingdom Delegation New York, Cairo, Rhodes, Haifa and Washington.

My telegram No.241.

Abducted British subjects.

Sheringham saw Doctor Bernard Joseph and Haganah Military Commander of Southern Jerusalem this morning. He was told that I.Z.L. said that it had "serious charges of espionage" against the arrested men but that neither Haganah nor Jewish Agency had seen the evidence. Jewish authorities were negotiating to secure handing over to them of the men and had received assurances that they would not be maltreated. A similar assurance was given to the chairman of the Truce Commission. If they were handed to Haganah this Consulate would be informed immediately and could rest assured that any charges would be fairly and properly investigated. If they were held by Haganah Consulate would be given proper facilities to safeguard their interests. Doctor Joseph denied all knowledge of the whereabouts of the arrested men and was unable to confirm the information given in the following paragraph. He added that if he was any judge of character, which he thought he was, he would be very surprised if there was anything in the charges against Bryant (Bryant has managed to keep on good terms with both communities but has many Jewish friends and is known as a moderate sympathiser with Jewish aspirations).

2. Sheringham was given the following information by two British journalists. It is generally believed all but two of the arrested men would soon be released. It is thought there is something in the charges against the two to be kept, Hawkins and Sylvester, particularly in view of suicide in Tel Aviv of a certain Major Lubiansky who was an official of Jerusalem Electric

Corporation and

Corporation and a senior Haganah officer and had been charged with espionage and offered the choice of execution or suicide. A certain Mrs. Geiger, a Palestinian who is a friend of Bryant, and a British ex Army and Police Officer named Harrison were also arrested by I.Z.L. but soon released. It is rumoured that Hawkins and Sylvester have been removed to territory of "state of Israel". Doctor Joseph said he hoped this was true since they would be safer there. He also said he had gone to Tel Aviv yesterday to inform Shertok fully of the incident and that the Provisional Government would probably discuss it at their meeting this afternoon; they might as a result of their meeting be able to do something (presumably through right wing members of the Government). One journalist said he knew that the arrested men had been kept, at least at first, in a house next to the Czechoslovak Consulate but would not agree to this information being passed on to Doctor Joseph.

3. Sheringham stressed the serious view which His Majesty's Government took of the incident and the bad effect it was likely to have on Anglo Jewish relations at a time when many were hoping the past might soon be forgotten. State of chaos which it revealed in Jerusalem and the inability of the Jewish authorities even to secure respect for the flags of the Security Council Truce Commission was hardly likely to do the Jews any good at Lake Success. He added that with paramount consideration of securing the safety of British subjects in mind this Consulate might have to consider a direct approach to the I.Z.L., even to Menahim Beigin himself if necessary, if it became apparent that Jewish Agency and Haganah were unable to secure the release of the arrested men. [Gps. undec.] this morning. Sheringham called instead on the American who was unable to add to what has been said above. Belgium Consul General telephoned this afternoon, to say he had raised the incident with the authorities in Tel Aviv and that the Truce Commission was meeting at 1300 hours G.M.T. to prepare its report on it to the Security Council. Sheringham thanked him in my name for his efforts on behalf of the arrested men.

Foreign Office pass Immediate to New York, Washington, Haifa and Rhodes as my telegrams Nos. 50, 17, 27 and 3.

[Repeated to New York, Washington, Haifa and Rhodes].

[Note by Communications Department: Repetition of undecypherable groups being obtained].

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